

## Remarks in Greenwood Village, Colorado

September 14, 2004

**The President.** Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Thank you all for coming. Listen, I'm here in Colorado asking for the vote. I'm proud to be back in this beautiful State. Matter of fact, it's nice to be out West, where the cowboy hats outnumber the ties. I appreciate you being here. I'm honored to be introduced by the man who led "the drive." Now I'm glad he's helping my drive. *[Laughter]* John Elway is a class act. I'm proud to call him friend, and I'm proud to call him supporter.

I'm also here asking for your help. See, I think we have a duty in this country to vote. I'm asking you to register your friends and neighbors to vote. And as you register people to vote, make sure you don't overlook discerning Democrats like Zell Miller. There's a lot of Democrats and independents understand that when you put Dick Cheney and me back in office, this country is going to be safer, stronger, and better for every American.

I'm sorry Laura is not here. She's a wonderful wife, a great mom. You know, when I asked her to marry me, she was a public school librarian in Texas. She said, "Fine, I'll marry you, so long as I don't have to give any political speeches." *[Laughter]* I said, "Okay, you won't have to give any." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to my word. *[Laughter]* She gave a great speech in New York City. The American people saw her heart, her compassion, her steady demeanor, her calm. I love her dearly. I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

I want to thank my friend Governor Bill Owens. He's one of the finest Governors in the State of—in this country, and he's represented the State of Colorado so well. I'm honored First Lady Frances Owens is with us today as well. Frances, thank you for coming. We're proud to call you friend.

I want to thank my friend Ben Nighthorse Campbell for being here. I was a little hot at old Ben when I heard he was retiring, because he's such a fine Senator, but I feel a

lot better knowing that Pete Coors is going to be the U.S. Senator following him.

**Audience members.** Pete! Pete! Pete!

**The President.** I want to thank Lieutenant Governor Jane Norton. Speaking about Nortons, Gale Norton is doing a heck of a good job in my Cabinet. I appreciate so very much the wonderful job she's doing. She was here in Colorado yesterday designating our newest national park, the Great Sand Dunes National Park. Doing a fine job.

I want to thank Mayor Nancy Sharpe for coming today. Madame Mayor, I appreciate you coming. Thank you for serving. I want to thank Senator Hank Brown. Appreciate him being here. He's a fine man.

I thank all the statehouse folks who are here and the courthouse folks who are here. Thanks for coming. Thanks for serving. I want to thank John Lynch of the mighty Denver Broncos for joining us today. Danny Kanell is with us today. I appreciate Danny coming. I want to thank Tom Nalen, center of the Denver Broncos, for joining us today. I want to thank my fellow Texan Dan Neil for joining us today. I don't know if you remember me when I was the Governor, but I remember you. *[Laughter]* Great to see you again.

Most of all, I want to thank you all for coming. I want to thank the grassroots activists. I want to thank the party officials who worked hard to put up the signs and make the phone calls. I urge you and encourage you to continue to work hard. With your help, we will carry Colorado again and win a great victory in November.

I'm looking forward to this campaign. I like to get out amongst the people. I'm going to tell the people where I stand, what I believe, and where I'm going to lead this Nation for the next 4 years.

I believe that every child can learn and every school must teach. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. So we're raising standards. We're measuring early so we can solve problems before they're too late. We're closing an achievement gap in America, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care.

I went to Washington to fix problems. Medicare was not modernizing the way medicine was. See, we would pay for a \$100,000 heart surgery in Medicare but would not pay for the prescription drugs that could prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense for our seniors, and it didn't make any sense for our taxpayers. We have strengthened Medicare for our seniors, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy and innovation and spirit of our small-business owners, our farmers and ranchers and our workers. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation.

When you're out rounding up the vote, remind people that our economy has been through a lot. We've been through a recession. We had corporate scandals. We passed tough laws, by the way, in Washington that make it abundantly clear, we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. The attacks on our country hurt our economy.

But we're overcoming those obstacles. Our economy is strong, and it is getting stronger. We've been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added 1.7 million new jobs since August of '03. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That's lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The unemployment rate in your State is 5.1 percent. This economy is strong, and we're not turning back.

I believe a President must confront problems, not pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch.

**Audience members.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

**The President.** I am running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I am running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that is why, with

your help, we're going to win a great victory in November.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. I appreciate the fact that he's out there every day gathering the vote. I admit he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [Laughter] I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. [Laughter] I picked him because of his judgment, his experience. I picked him because he can get the job done.

When you're out rounding up the vote, remind people I understand the world in which we live in changing. You know, when our dads were coming up, people had one job, one career for one company. Today, that's different. People are changing jobs often. They're changing careers. In the old days women stayed at home. Today, women are in the workplace. They're working in the home and outside the home. These are changing times we live in, different times.

And yet, the most fundamental systems of our Government, the Tax Code, health coverage, pension plans, worker training, were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. In a new term, I will work with the Congress to transform these systems so that all citizens are equipped, prepared, and thus truly free to make your own choices so you can pursue the American Dream.

A hopeful society has a growing economy. I've got a plan to keep this economy moving forward. To create more jobs in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means we've got to reduce the regulatory burden on our small-business owners. To create jobs here, we've got to stop these junk lawsuits that threaten employers.

To create jobs here at home, we need an energy plan. Listen, I submitted a plan to the United States Congress 2 years ago. It's stuck, of course, because of politics. But it's a plan that encourages conservation, encourages the use of renewables like ethanol and biodiesel, encourages clean coal technology, and uses technology to wisely explore for natural gas here in our own hemisphere. What I'm telling you is, in order to keep jobs here, we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To make sure this economy grows and to keep jobs here, we've got to open up markets

overseas for our products. See, we open up our markets for foreign goods, and that helps you. It helps you because when you have more choices in the marketplace, you're likely to get that which you want at a better price and higher quality. So I tell the Chinese, for example, "You treat us the way we treat you." And I do that because I know American workers and farmers and ranchers and small-business owners can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere so long as the rules are fair.

In order to make sure jobs stay here, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money in Washington, and we've got to keep your taxes low. Taxes are an issue in this campaign. See, I'm running against a fellow who has had a history of voting for higher taxes.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** And thus far in the campaign, he's proposed over \$2 trillion of new Federal spending.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** And so they said, "Well, how are you going to pay for it?" He said, "That's easy. I'm just going to tax the rich."

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** Now, first of all, you can't tax the rich enough to pay for his new spending, so there's a tax gap. And secondly, you've heard that rhetoric before, haven't you?

**Audience members.** Yes!

**The President.** Yes. "Elect me. I'm going to tax the rich." But the rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason—to stick you with the bill. But we're not going to let him tax you. We're going to win in November.

**Audience members.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

**The President.** See, something else about taxes. Our Tax Code is a complicated mess. It is full of special interest loopholes. Americans spend about 6 billion hours a year on the taxes. It's got over a million words in the code. In a new term, I'll call Republicans and Democrats together to simplify the Federal Tax Code.

A changing economy means many new jobs require new skills. A changing economy and a growing economy creates new opportunities for our workers, but oftentimes, the worker doesn't have the skills necessary to fill the jobs. That's why I'm a strong pro-

ponent of community colleges. That's why I believe we ought to promote a lifetime of learning for America's workers, so they can match their skills with the jobs which exist.

I also understand most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college. That's—when I say changing worlds, that's one of the aspects of a changing world. Yet, only one in four of our students gets there. That's why in our high schools, we'll fund early intervention programs to help at-risk students. We'll place a new focus on math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

In a time of change, we need to reform our health care system. Health care costs are rising rapidly. They're burdening our economy. They're leaving too many people uninsured. I have a commonsense, practical plan to make high-quality health care more affordable and more accessible. More than one-half of the uninsured today are small-business employees and their families. That's why I believe small firms ought to be allowed to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available for big companies.

I met Gail Lindley. She is a small-business owner from Denver. She is worried about her employees, and she's worried about the cost of health care. She understands how powerful association health care plans will be for small businesses. She said this, "My employees would be thrilled. They would be paying lower premiums. I would have more money to invest back in my company." Washington needs to understand that we need to help small businesses when it comes to health care here in America.

We need to expand tax-free health savings accounts. We will help small businesses with health savings accounts so they can provide them for their employees. Today I met Jeff Cheley. He runs a small business here. He runs Cheley Colorado Camps, CCC. He has an HSA. He's planning to provide them for his workers. He says, "It helps us cover our workers and lower overall costs. For a small family business like ours, it's a good deal." What I'm telling you is we've got a practical

plan to help people who are uninsured and to help our small-business owners.

We're going to expand community health centers so poor citizens have access to preventative and primary care. As a matter of fact, I believe every poor county in America ought to have a community health center. We're going to make sure that we bring technology into medicine to lower costs. But most of all, what we need to do is to make sure that we stop these frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of your medicine and driving good docs out of business.

I don't think you can pro-doctor, pro-patient, pro-hospital, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. See, I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice. He put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I'm standing with the docs and patients. I am for medical liability reform—now.

There is a difference of opinion when it comes to health care in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who has proposed a massive, complicated blueprint to increase Government control over your health care.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** They estimated the cost of his plan yesterday at 1.5 trillion new dollars. And that's a lot, even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [Laughter] I believe that we—I believe America is better suited for our commonsense plan that says health decisions will be made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

In changing times, it helps to bring stability in people's life if they own something. We're going to continually promote an ownership society in America. Do you realize the homeownership rate in America, under my administration, is at an alltime high? It's a fantastic statistic, isn't it? During the next term, we'll continue to promote ownership to every corner of this country. I love the fact that more and more people from all walks of life are opening the place where they live—open that door up where they live, saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

I think we need to extend the concept of ownership to the retirement systems. If you're a senior citizen, Social Security is going to pay what they said they're going to pay. I don't care what the politicians in Wash-

ington tell you; the promise will be kept. If you're a baby boomer like me, we're in good shape when it comes to Social Security.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren, see? That's where the bind comes. That's where the problems will exist in Social Security, not for our seniors who've retired, not for those of us who are near retirement, but for the kids. We need to think differently when it comes to our pension plans. I believe younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their own tax money and set it aside in a personal savings account to make sure Social Security meets the promise.

No, these are—it's a changing world. There's a clear difference of opinion. We're running against some fellows who want to expand the reach of Government. We want to expand opportunity. We want people to be able to realize their dreams. We want people to be able to realize the great promise of this country. In this world of change, some things don't change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In times of change, we must support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations.

We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're reforming and strengthening our intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We'll strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

We will work to advance liberty in the broader Middle East and throughout the

world, and we'll prevail. Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We knew his long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. And we know after September the 11th, our country must think differently. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. So I went to the Congress. The Congress looked at the intelligence I had looked at. They remembered the history of Saddam just the way I remembered him, and they saw a threat. My opponent looked at the same intelligence. He came to the same conclusion I did, that Saddam was a threat, and voted "yes" when it came to the authorization of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into harm's way, we must try all of our options to solve a problem. I was hoping diplomacy would work. I was really hoping diplomacy would work. And that's why I went to the United Nations, and I spoke to the United Nations. And when I went to the United Nations——

*[At this point, there was a disturbance in the audience.]*

**Audience members.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

**The President.** And so I went to the United Nations. The United Nations looked

at the same intelligence I did. They had the debate. They remembered the history I remembered and voted 15 to nothing in the United Nations Security Council, saying to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." I believe that when the world says something, it must mean it in order to make the world more peaceful. I believe when the American President speaks, he must mean what he says in order to make the world more peaceful.

Saddam Hussein had no intention of listening to the demands of the free world. As he had for over a decade, he ignored the resolution. As a matter of fact, when they sent inspectors into his country, he systematically deceived the inspectors. So I had a choice to make at this point in our history. I realized diplomacy wasn't going to work. Do I trust a madman, forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend our country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

**Audience members.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

**The President.** Because we acted to defend our country, 50 million people live in freedom. In Afghanistan, young girls now go to school for the first time. Their mothers are no longer taken in the public square and whipped because they don't toe the line with the backward Taliban. Because we acted, 10 million citizens, 41 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential election. Despite ongoing acts of violence, Iraq now has a strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections are scheduled in January. Our country is safer because we made tough decisions.

Free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists, instead of harboring them. Our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear. We'll help new leaders to train their armies so that the citizens of Afghanistan and Iraq can defend themselves against the few who want to stop the hopes of the many. We'll help them move toward elections. We'll get them on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops

will return home with the honor they have earned.

I'm proud of our military. We've got a great military. I've had the privilege of meeting with the service men and women who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. I know their unselfish courage and their great decency. I want to thank the veterans who are here who have set such a great example for those who wear the uniform. I want to thank the military families who are here today for coming.

I want to assure you, our Federal Government will support our troops. We will give them what they need to complete their missions. That's why I went to the Congress a year ago and asked for \$87 billion of supplemental funding. This money was to go to our troops in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq. It was a really important funding. We received great bipartisan support. As a matter of fact, the support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against it—

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** —2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** When you're out gathering the vote, remind people there's only four United States Senators who voted to authorize the use of force and then didn't vote to fund the troops—only four, two of whom are my opponent and his runningmate. So they asked him why. He said, "Well, I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, before I voted against it."

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** Now, I've spent some time in Colorado. The people out here don't talk like that. He said he was proud of his vote. They kept pressing him. And he finally said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Before 2000, Senator Kerry once said, "It would be naive, to the point of grave danger, not to believe that if left to his own devices, Saddam Hussein will provoke, misjudge, or stumble into a future, more dangerous confrontation with the civilized world." That was his opinion during the time of my predecessor's Presidency. In 2002, you know, he

voted for the war, then voted against the funding for our troops. When the heat got on the Democrat primary, he declared himself the antiwar candidate. Then several months later, earlier this summer, he said he would still have voted to go to war, even knowing everything we know today. Last week, he adopted the language of his one-time rival Howard Dean, saying, "It's the wrong war at the wrong time," even though he earlier said it was the right decision and he supported it.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** So here's the latest wrinkle. Here's the latest twist. He's now decided we're spending too much money in Iraq, even though on national TV last summer, he criticized us for not spending enough.

**Audience members.** Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

**The President.** The American President must be clear in his thinking and must be clear in his speaking in order to make this world a freer place.

I appreciate the contributions of our friends and allies. During the next 4 years, we'll continue to work to strengthen our alliances. There's nearly 40 countries involved in Afghanistan, some 30 in Iraq. But as we strengthen alliances, I'll assure you, I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I believe liberty can change nations. I believe liberty has the capacity to take a nation that has been plagued and tortured by a tyrannical thug into a partner in peace. I believe that, in part, because I've had a great experience with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. You know, it wasn't all that long ago in the march of history that my dad and your dads or granddads were fighting the Japanese as a sworn enemy.

Yet, after World War II, Harry Truman and many American citizens believed that liberty could transform an enemy into an ally. I know a lot of people doubted it then. A lot of people doubt that concept now. But because they stayed true to what we believe, Japan became a democracy, and now I sit at the same table with Prime Minister Koizumi talking about the peace. And that's what we want. We understand in the short

term, we'll stay on the offensive. In the long term, we'll spread liberty to make the world a more peaceful place, a chance for our children and grandchildren to grow up in a more peaceful world.

You see, I believe that if given the chance, the people of the Middle East, who plead in silence for their liberty, will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe women in the Middle East long for a chance to realize their dreams and their God-given talents. I believe that freedom is powerful. I believe all these things, not because freedom is America's gift to the world; I believe it because freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

**Audience members.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

**The President.** This century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we'll build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By reforming our systems of Government, we'll help more Americans realize their dreams. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of our country. We'll pass the enduring values of our country to a new generation. We will continue to lead the world to make it more free and more peaceful.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that makes us a great country.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. Three years ago today, on September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. There were workers there in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember a guy grabbed me by the arm, a big old burly firefighter—I guess he was a firefighter—he said, "Do not let me down." I have a responsibility that goes on. I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, as I traveled your beautiful State and our great land, I made a pledge

to our fellow citizens that I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:51 a.m. at the Coors Amphitheatre. In his remarks, he referred to pro football Hall of Famer John Elway, who introduced the President; Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Gov. Bill Owens of Colorado and his wife, Frances; Lt. Gov. Jane Norton of Colorado; Mayor Nancy Sharpe of Greenwood Village, CO; former Senator Hank Brown of Colorado; John Lynch, safety, Danny Kanell, quarterback, Tom Nalen, center, and Dan Neil, offensive guard, Denver Broncos; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; former Democratic Presidential candidate Howard Dean; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

### **Remarks to the General Conference of the National Guard Association of the United States in Las Vegas, Nevada**

*September 14, 2004*

Thank you all. Thanks for the warm welcome. I am glad to join you here in Nevada. I'm also honored to be up here with the Governor. He said to remind you of an important thing here. He said, "What happens in Vegas"—[laughter]—"stays in Vegas." [Laughter] I hope you've enjoyed yourself in this fantastic part of our country. I'm honored to be invited to the 126th national conference. It's a pleasure to be with the brave men and women of the National Guard.

As the General just said, you've had many famous Americans in your ranks, including men named Jefferson, Madison, Lincoln, and Truman. Nineteen individuals have served both in the Guard and as President of the United States, and I am proud to be one of them.

The men and women of the National Guard are deployed around the world today, fighting the forces of terror in Afghanistan and Iraq and helping Americans threatened with natural disasters, like hurricanes here